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No. 123

House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PETRI).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 21, 1999.

I hereby appoint the Honorable THOMAS E. PETRI to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. McDevitt, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 2084. An act making appropriations for the Department of Transportation and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate insists upon its amendment to the bill (H.R. 2084) "An Act making appropriations for the Department of Transportation and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes," requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. SHELBY, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. BOND, Mr. GORTON, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. CAMPBELL, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. BYRD, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. REID, Mr. KOHL, Mrs. MURRAY, and Mr. INOUE, to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of Janu-

ary 19, 1999, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) for 5 minutes.

ELIMINATION OF MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of representing a very diverse district. I represent the south side of Chicago, south suburbs, and Cook and Will counties, industrial communities like Joliet, a lot of corn fields and farm towns too.

When one represents such a diverse constituency, cities, suburbs, and country, one learns to listen and listen for those common concerns and common questions that are brought forward, whether by suburbanites or city dwellers or our farm folk.

I find that in the district that I have the privilege of representing in Illinois that the common concerns are pretty simple, that folks want us to work together, they want us to solve our challenges, they want us to find solutions, and they want us to change how Washington works.

As I look back over the last 5 years, I am pleased that we have worked to find those solutions, solutions to the challenges today of balancing the budget, of cutting taxes, and reforming our welfare system and we did change how Washington works.

As I look back over the last 5 years, I am proud to say that we balanced the budget for the first time in 28 years, 3 years ago. We are now working on our third balanced budget in a row. We did

such a great job that now we have all this extra money of three trillion surplus dollars projected over the next 10 years.

We cut taxes for the middle class for the first time in 16 years, and three million Illinois children are going to benefit from the \$500 per child tax credit. We reformed welfare for the first time in a generation.

I am proud to say that in Illinois the welfare roles have been cut in half. In my home county of Grundy, our welfare roles have dropped by 84 percent. We also tamed the tax collector, shifting the burden of proof off the backs of the taxpayer and onto the IRS. Those are fundamental changes, balancing the budget, cutting taxes, reforming our welfare system, and taming the tax collector.

People often say, well, what is next? What other solutions is Congress going to find to the challenges that we face? Our agenda is simple. We want to strengthen our local schools. We want to lower the tax burden and make it fair for working families. We want to strengthen Social Security and Medicare. And we also want to pay down the national debt that was run up over 30 years of deficit spending.

I often hear common questions in the district I represent, whether at a union hall or the VFW or the Chamber of Commerce or a coffee shop or a grain elevator. People often say, when are you folks in Washington going to stop raiding the Social Security Trust Fund?

I am proud to say this Republican Congress is putting a stop to that. In fact, this year we are walling off the Social Security Trust Fund, setting aside a hundred percent of Social Security for the first time in 30 years for Social Security only.

The President says he wants to set aside 62 percent. We believe in a hundred percent of Social Security for Social Security. That means \$200 billion

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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more to strengthen Social Security and Medicare.

I am often asked, people never also talk about that huge national debt that was built up over the 30 years of deficit spending beginning in the 1960s. I am proud to say that, under the Republican balanced budget, we pay down \$2.2 trillion of the national debt, the public debt, over the next few years; and that is about \$200 billion more than the President would under his proposal.

The question that I am also often asked is when are we going to do something about the tax code. People of course are fed up that 40 percent of the average family's income goes to Washington and the State capital and the county courthouse and the local government, and that tax burden is the highest in peacetime history. But they are also frustrated about the complexity of our tax code and the unfairness of our tax code.

Over the last couple of years I have often asked this question in the well of the House, and that is, is it right, is it fair that under our tax code married working couples pay more in taxes? A husband and wife who are both in the workforce pay more in taxes than an identical couple that live outside of the marriage. Is it right, is it fair that under our tax code that 21 million married, working couples pay on average \$1,400 more in higher taxes just because they are married? Of course not. It is wrong that under our tax code that 21 million married, working couples pay \$1,400 more just because they are married.

I have a photo here of a young couple in Joliet, Illinois, one of the communities that I represent, Michelle and Shad Hallihan. They are public school teachers in the Joliet public school system. They just had a baby. They are celebrating the birth of a child. They suffer the marriage tax penalty because they are both in the workforce. And under our tax code this young couple who just had a baby, who is just starting their life together as a family, pays higher taxes just because they chose to get married.

Now, had they chose to live together outside of marriage they would not pay those higher taxes. I am proud to say the House and Senate passed legislation which will eliminate the marriage tax penalty for the majority of those who suffer it. It is a key part; it is an essential part of the Financial Freedom Act, legislation that will lower the tax burden as well as simplify the tax code and bring fairness to the tax code.

The question of the day is, Mr. President, are you going to join with us eliminating the marriage tax penalty to help hard-working, young Americans, actually Americans of every age, because seniors suffer the marriage tax penalty, but people like Michelle and Shad Hallihan who suffer the marriage tax penalty?

Our legislation eliminates the marriage tax penalty for a majority of

those who suffer it. It should be a bipartisan effort. We ask the President to join with us, sign the tax cut, sign the Financial Freedom Act, and eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

INS REIMBURSEMENT TO GUAM AND COMPACT-IMPACT AID FUNDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Guam (Mr. UNDERWOOD) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, today I want to talk about a couple of issues that are vitally important to the people of Guam and as we face the prospect of trying to deal with the remaining appropriations measures and face the possibility of some protracted negotiations between the leaders of both the House and Senate and the Administration, and these two issues pertain to the reimbursement for costs that have been incurred in Guam as a result of unrestricted immigration as well as recent experience, in particular this year with the onset of the arrival of many illegal immigrants coming from the People's Republic of China.

Since the beginning of this year, Guam has been marked by some of the smugglers inside the People's Republic of China as the newest target for Chinese criminal organizations smuggling human cargo from the PRC.

In the past 4 months alone, Guam has been the recipient of more than 700 illegal aliens seeking political asylum in the United States. These figures have already surpassed the total of 1998 of over 600. It is further suspected that many more undocumented arrivals have hit Guam that have not been counted.

As the U.S.'s westernmost border, Guam is perhaps the most attractive destination to enter the United States from the PRC. Guam is the closest American jurisdiction to China. The full application of the INA, the Immigration and Nationality Act, applies to Guam. Because of this, what has happened is that these people come to Guam and apply for some form of political asylum and then they are allowed to move on.

Through very protracted negotiations involving the White House and particularly the National Security Council, as well as INS officials, we have been able to slow down this process by using the Northern Marianas as the place where they could also be taken. Interestingly, in the Northern Marianas, the full weight of the INS does not apply so, as a consequence, they were more easily repatriated back to the PRC.

Guam is a very small place, only 212 small miles and a small population of 150,000. The real problem here for the people of Guam is that despite all of the guarantees of the Federal Government, the cost of housing these people

has fallen on the Government of Guam. As a matter of fact, leading up until last month, the total cost is well over \$7 million this year alone. And there continues to be over 500 of these individuals remaining in Guam facilities, in Guam Department of Correction facilities; and the prospect is that they may be there another year or 2 years at the rate of approximately \$50,000 a day.

Now, we had hoped that this reimbursement would come through in the process of the appropriations as the administration has asked for that, but it has not come to pass.

Last week, however, our neighbors to the north, who have a much smaller bill presented to the Federal Government, the INS surprisingly announced that they were satisfying that bill from the Northern Marianas to the amount of \$750,000.

So today, certainly I call upon the INS to get moving on this issue to try to find the resources to reimburse the people of Guam and to reimburse the local coffers for this cost, which is not our doing and which was entered into as a result of good-faith negotiations between the Government of Guam and federal officials.

Secondarily, there is also the issue of compact-impact assistance. This is as a result of the unrestricted migration of citizens from the newly independent states, the so-called freely associated states, primarily the federated states of Micronesia.

This has been a continuing source of debate. There is a federal law which says that any social and educational costs as a result of this unrestricted migration, they are the only independent countries in the world that have no quotas, no visa requirements; they can freely migrate into any part of the United States, that as a result of any social or educational costs, the Federal Government will reimburse the territories.

Well, because Guam is near these areas, these people have gone to Guam and continue to utilize social and educational resources, which we estimate amount to anywhere between \$15 million and \$20 million a year.

As I speak today, in 1996, we were able to get an amendment to the Interior Appropriations Act to get a stream of roughly \$4.5 million to Guam every year since then. But we certainly look forward to balancing those books a little bit more.

The President's request put in \$10 million for the upcoming year. And certainly it is my hope that as we continue the process of vetting the appropriations measures that these two important items, obligations of the Federal Government will be met.

WHY WE NEED TO MAKE AED'S MORE AVAILABLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.